

Statement of

Scrutiny Board
(Children's Services)

Inclusion

Introduction



Introduction

1. At its meeting in October 2007, the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) considered the draft Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy.
2. The revised Inclusive Learning Strategy is a Children Leeds strategy, and whilst its initial focus is on education, the aim is to develop more multi-disciplinary working.
3. Having considered the draft Strategy, the Board appointed a working group to give more detailed consideration to two of the strategic objectives outlined in the strategy:
 - the further development of specialist provision, including the role of the SILCs;
 - the further development of the behaviour continuum and provision, including the role of the pupil referral units.
4. The working group was also commissioned by the Board to review progress in implementing the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) in April 2006 arising from its inquiry into Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs).
5. The working group met on three occasions: 5th December 2007, 27th January and 6th March 2008.
6. Following presentation of the working group's findings to the full Scrutiny Board, the Board has agreed the following statement and recommendations.

Comments and Recommendations



SILCs

1. At the first meeting of the working group the focus was on strategic objective 2 of the Inclusive Learning Strategy: the further development of specialist provision, including the role of the SILCs.
2. Members considered the project brief and action plans for this objective of the strategy.
3. This objective will seek to bring greater coherence and consistency to the roles of the various types of provision – ie mainstream school, resourced provision, SILC partnerships, SILCs – so that there is a clear continuum of provision to meet varying levels of need.
4. Members flagged parental participation as an ongoing concern, even whilst acknowledging the positive progress and activity that has taken place, particularly recently.
5. In particular, parental perception about the amount of choice parents have with regard to a SILC or mainstream placement for their child remains an issue for some parents. A key factor here is the requirement for a statement in order to access a SILC place.
6. Officers repeated a request for Members of the Scrutiny Board to encourage individual parents who approached them with concerns about inappropriate placements to contact Education Leeds, in order that they could fulfil their duty to investigate these cases.
7. This led on to another concern of the working group – regarding the appropriate use of special educational needs (SEN) funding through the Funding for Inclusion (FFI) scheme, by some mainstream schools. Funding for pupils' special educational needs in mainstream schools is delegated to schools, and the management and governing body will then determine how it is spent at their discretion.
8. Members were very pleased to hear that closer monitoring of how schools spend resources allocated to them for SEN provision is being incorporated into Education Leeds' school improvement teams and School Improvement Partners' monitoring and challenge of

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schools, on an outcome focused basis. This is part of a stronger inclusion focus in this relationship.

Recommendation 1

That Education Leeds report quarterly to the Scrutiny Board (Children's Services) on any concerns regarding schools' use of delegated SEN funding raised through the school improvement process, and how schools have responded to challenge.

9. Outreach was felt to be another key area for development, in order to use existing expertise from SILCs and partnership schools to support mainstream schools to increase their ability to meet the needs of SEN pupils well. The Working Group agreed that further developing the expertise of mainstream schools is still a key issue in making mainstream school a realistic option for more parents.
10. Some members of the working group also maintain concerns that, where some mainstream schools rely extensively on Teaching Assistants and Higher Level Teaching Assistants to provide support for these pupils, then there is not enough pedagogical input for these children and that they may not achieve their full educational potential as a result. This was not felt to be a widespread

problem, but was a significant factor for those small number of pupils struggling to cope.

11. Whilst it will take some time to deliver the objectives of the Inclusive Learning Strategy, the working group was reminded that recent Ofsted inspections had judged existing SILC provision to be good or outstanding. Existing pupils were benefiting from ongoing improvements and developments at the same time as the longer term plans were being progressed.
12. Officers also informed the working group that the review of provision as part of this objective acknowledged the need for specialist SEN provision to be available in each area of the city, although in some cases that may not be in the current location(s).
13. In particular, the various school building programmes offered opportunities, such as the development at Temple Moor with the East SILC.

Recommendation 2

That Education Leeds commits to early consultation with parents and professionals on any proposals for changes in the location of specialist SEN provision.

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Behaviour

14. The second meeting of the working group focused on the third objective of the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy – the further development of the behaviour continuum and provision, including the role of the pupil referral units. The Board's particular interest in this objective was sparked by concerns raised in spring 2007, when the Board received a briefing on the No Child Left Behind initiative and the Area Management Board arrangements.
15. At that time, members had noted the governance and joint working arrangements being put in place, but asked for further evidence of additional support on the ground to assist staff in schools to tackle behaviour issues on a day to day basis, especially at the lower end of the continuum.
16. The working group received a presentation on the development of a new model for the behaviour continuum, which demonstrates how provision would be delivered in each wedge of the city, providing a range of levels of support from assistance in schools through to a centralised BESD (Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties) SILC provision.
17. A diagram of the model and a description of the provision planned for each Key Stage is appended to this report.
18. Although this hub and spoke model is still subject to consultation, some parts of it are already being developed, for example the Oasis centres. If fully implemented, it will increase the availability of local behaviour provision, particularly at an 'intermediate' level.
19. The working group discussed the geographical distribution of current provision, and in particular the impact on travelling times for pupils, and the cost of transport. For example members noted that approximately £120k of the £400k budget for the Oakwood site was spent on taxi fares.
20. It is anticipated that one of the benefits of the new model will be that transport costs will reduce, with more money available to spend directly on provision.
21. Members stressed the importance of the new provision developing the notion of a 'revolving door' so that pupils returned to mainstream provision as soon as possible,

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and other 'at risk' pupils are able to benefit from support. This is key to resolving historical perceptions of blockages in the system.

22. The working group asked if there was any evidence or case studies relating to the number of young people 'saved' from exclusion by intermediate interventions such as alternative programmes. There should be a system of tracking and monitoring the success of the various interventions across the whole behaviour continuum as part of the increased drive for accountability in this area.

Recommendation 3

That Education Leeds reports to the Scrutiny Board on how it will monitor the success of different behaviour interventions across the whole continuum in achieving outcomes for pupils (including mainstream schools, alternative provision, partnership provision, resourced provision, Area Management Board provision, Pupil Development Centres, Learning Support Units, Oasis provision, Teaching and Learning Centres, Pupil Referral Units and SILC provision).

23. In terms of staff development, the working group discussed some of the keys to success. In particular, siting new provision

in excellent schools was a deliberate strategy. Education Leeds was also exploring the potential for mainstream staff to be seconded to behaviour provision to develop their expertise.

24. Members talked about issues around transition from primary to secondary school. They suggested the need to identify vulnerable pupils who have not quite required outside placements in primary school, but for whom the disruption of transfer to secondary school is liable to trigger such a need. Primary schools identifying such pupils and alerting secondary schools was part of a preventative strategy, but it was also hoped that the new Oasis centres would help meet this type of need.

25. Members asked about the referral routes for the Oasis provision, which will take the form of eight place provision which pupils will typically attend for half a term, whilst maintaining regular contact and part-time attendance at their existing mainstream school. The working group was told that it was expected that the referral route would be via schools, against locally set criteria. It was not anticipated that parents would be able to refer a child, although if a school refused to

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refer a child the parent would of course have recourse to normal routes to pursue any complaint, including through the governing body or the Parent Partnership Service.

26. The working group advised that it was important that referral routes need to be set out clearly from the outset, as it was circumstances such as this which could create tensions with parents when they felt that the system was failing them.

Recommendation 4
That Education Leeds clearly sets out the referral routes for the Oasis centres.

27. The working group discussed with officers the progress that was being made in establishing an ongoing dialogue with parents, both collectively and individually. It was recognised that on the whole communication had improved significantly, but members stressed that the positive work on this issue needed to be maintained through continued efforts in order to overcome some of the deep-seated history of parental suspicion.

28. The working group was also very interested to discover how the changing pattern of school provision – ie the establishment

of Academies and Trusts – impacted on behaviour issues.

29. Aspects discussed included:

- Exclusions
- Exemptions from admitting pupils excluded from other schools
- Admissions policies and the knock-on impact on the intake of other local schools
- Different trigger levels for exclusion
- Different financial rules – funding does not follow the excluded pupil in the case of the Academy.

Recommendation 5
That Education Leeds continues to lobby the DCSF to ensure that the establishment of future Academies, especially in Leeds, provides for funding to follow an excluded pupil.

30. Members were pleased to hear from officers of the work that had been done to develop relationships between Education Leeds and the David Young Community Academy, as well as other local schools, and of the success of this work so far. It was helpful to be able to discuss these issues with officers, following the attendance of the Academy Principal at the Scrutiny Board the previous week.

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31. Some of the lessons learned were being built into the draft protocols for any future Academies and partnerships in Leeds, as an expression of the local authority's ethos and commitment to schools working collaboratively. This is an issue that the Scrutiny Board has stressed continuously throughout its work, and particularly in its inquiry last year on the implications of trust schools for the local authority.

32. The working group also noted that the change to Trust status in Garforth had not resulted in any changes in access to provision to date.

Scrutiny Inquiry on SILCs

33. The working group was also tasked by the Scrutiny Board with tracking progress in implementing the recommendations of the original SILCs inquiry, which reported in April 2006.

34. When the SILCs inquiry report was originally produced, it had been anticipated that a review of the SEN policy, including accommodation and funding was imminent.

35. Members were clear in their inquiry report that *"We also need to recognise that our inquiry took place at a particular*

moment in time, and our findings will reflect that fact."

36. Eighteen months on from the original scrutiny inquiry, the publication of the refreshed Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy meant that there was a need to revisit these findings and take stock of progress. Accordingly, the working group considered an update on each of the recommendations, relating them to the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy.

37. In order to reflect the new approach outlined in the Inclusive Learning Strategy, it is agreed that it is no longer appropriate to monitor the recommendations as they were originally written in 2006.

38. Instead the working group has considered how the new approach outlined in the new Strategy reflects the spirit of the Board's previous inquiry and recommended to the Board that implementation of the four strategic objectives contained in the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy should form the key focus for ongoing monitoring.

39. The Scrutiny Board has agreed that this will form the basis for the next stage of its involvement in the development of inclusive practice.

Comments and Recommendations



Recommendation 6

That Education Leeds and the Principal Scrutiny Adviser devise an appropriate framework for the Scrutiny Board to monitor implementation of the Leeds Inclusive Learning Strategy during 2008/09.

Participants



Members of the Working Group

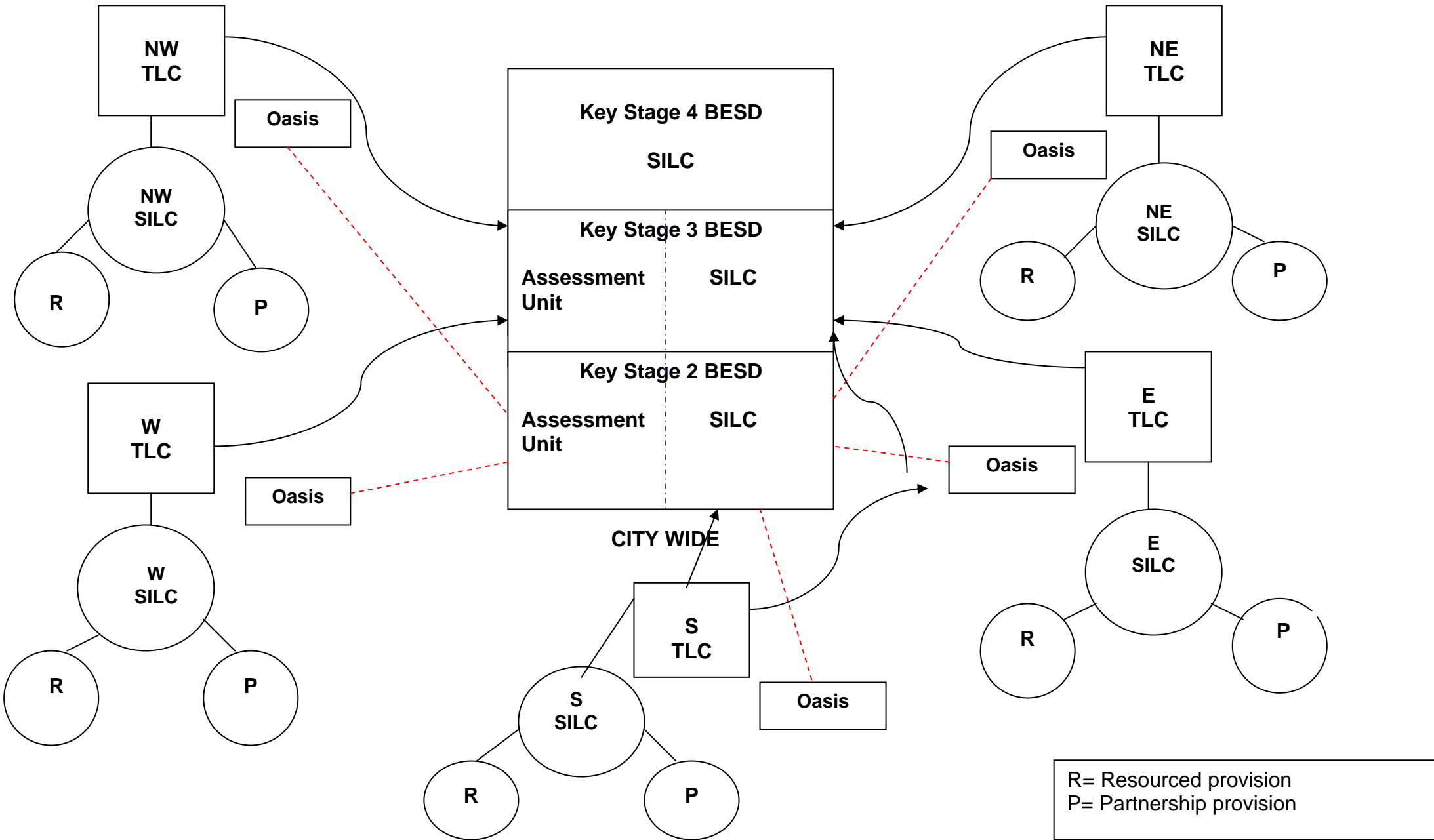
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Witnesses

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**SPECIALIST
BESD PROVISION**

Area based



1. At Key Stages 1&2, the following behaviour continuum is envisaged:

| Universal | Universal | Targeted | Targeted | Targeted | Specialist |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| Primary schools | Nurture provision | Pupil Development Centres (PDC) | Oasis provision | KS2 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) | KS2 SILC |

2. At Key Stage 3, the following behaviour continuum is envisaged:

| Universal | Universal | Targeted | Targeted | Targeted | Specialist |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------------------|------------------|----------|---------------|
| Secondary schools | Learning Mentors | Learning Support Units (LSU) | Learning Centres | KS3 PRU | KS3 BESD SILC |

3. At Key Stage 4, the following behaviour continuum is envisaged:

| Universal | Universal | Targeted | Targeted | Targeted | Specialist |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Secondary schools | Learning Mentors | LSUs | Learning Centres | Alternative Provision | KS4 BESD SILC |